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Mormonbasics.com is humbled to bring you a commentary on the hymns published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This commentary is presented in a two-column format. The original text, as presented in the hymnbook published by the LDS Church, is in the left column. The comments on the right are provided by mormonbasics.com. We have even changed the color of the text so there won't be any question as to who wrote what.

Personal note from the commentator:

The hymns of the Church are sacred text. The Lord has made it very clear to us through his prophets that the singing of hymns is a form of prayer, and as such is sacred communication. Much of the sacred Spirit and reverence we experience in our meetings, especially Sacrament Meeting, comes from the Spirit that accompanies the singing of the hymns.

The hymns are written in poetic form, and as such are able to take certain licenses and liberties with the English language that cannot normally be expressed in any other way. It is certainly not the aim of this commentary to improve on the beauty of the poetic expressions found in our sacred hymns. As a teacher of English to those who speak other languages, I have found that many of the hymns have expressions that are difficult for some people to understand.

Because hymns are written to fit a set rhythmic pattern or meter, often the expression has to be condensed to fit in a small space, but still convey its intended meaning. It is the combination of the rhythm, text, and music that create such a powerful Spiritual experience when singing the hymns. My attempts to explain some of the meaning behind the text should not detract from the original meaning, nor should it replace the original meaning. Hymns, like parables, take on different meanings as the circumstances of our lives change. My commentary is only a starting point for (hopefully) a better understanding of the overall meaning of the hymn in this work. Anyone else writing this same commentary would have different perspectives and points to make. That is the nature of a commentary. I pray that what I say will, in some way, help in your understanding of this hymn. Since this is a personal study of the hymns, I will sometimes use the first person when writing the commentary.

Kelly P. Merrill

Come, Come, Ye Saints

1. Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;
 But with joy wend your way.
 Though hard to you this journey may appear,
 Grace shall be as your day.
 'Tis better far for us to strive
 Our useless cares from us to drive;
 Do this, and joy your hearts will swell--
 All is well! All is well!

2. Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard?
 'Tis not so; all is right.
 Why should we think to earn a great reward
 If we now shun the fight?
 Gird up your loins; fresh courage take.
 Our God will never us forsake;
 And soon we'll have this tale to tell--
 All is well! All is well!

3. We'll find the place which God for us prepared,
 Far away in the West,
 Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;
 There the Saints will be blessed.
 We'll make the air with music ring,
 Shout praises to our God and King;
 Above the rest these words we'll tell--
 All is well! All is well!

4. And should we die before our journey's through,
 Happy day! All is well!
 We then are free from toil and sorrow, too;
 With the just we shall dwell!
 But if our lives are spared again
 To see the Saints their rest obtain,
 Oh, how we'll make this chorus swell--
 All is well! All is well!

MUSIC

English folk song

TEXT

William Clayton, 1814-1879

SCRIPTURES

Doctrine and Covenants 61:36-39, Doctrine and
 Covenants 59:1-4

The Saints are the members of Christ's Church. We are told to come and have no fear of the exertion and labors before us. We should go on our way, or live our lives with joy. Life may appear difficult, but we have as much of Christ's Grace as any day might require to get us through our hardships. Rather than worrying about how hard life is, it is far better for us to work towards getting rid of our useless cares, the things that do not really matter. If we can get rid of the things in our lives that do not really matter, so we can focus on the things that do matter, our hearts will swell or be filled with joy, and all will be well.

Why do we feel sorry for ourselves and think our lives are too hard? That is not so, life is good. How can we think that we will earn a great reward in the life to come if we are not willing to work hard and fight the good fight here and now?

Gird up your loins, put on the armor of God, get ready for the spiritual battles of this life. Be courageous, because God will never leave us alone. The day will come when we will be able to look back on this life and tell the stories of our struggles, and all will be well.

We may be displaced and without a home now, but God will help us find the place He has prepared for us. It is far away in the West. When we get there we will be safe. No one will come there to hurt us or make us afraid any more. In that place the saints will be blessed. We will make the air ring like a bell with our shouts or praises to our God and King. Above everything else we will say that all is well or good.

This verse is an afterthought. If, while we are traveling to our destination we happen to die, we can still say that all is well. If we die then we are free from all the labor and sorrow of this life, and we will live among the just, the righteous saints of God in the spirit world.

But if our lives are spared through all this heartache and hardship to see the saints find rest in the West then how loudly we will sing the songs of praise that all is well.